



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 5, 2008

TO: Ordinance Committee

FROM: Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Ordinance Amending Santa Barbara Municipal Code Section 14.23.009 And Chapter 22.80 Regarding Water Conservation Standards

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Ordinance Committee consider proposed amendments to Santa Barbara Municipal Code Section 14.23.009 and Chapter 22.80 regarding Water Conservation Standards and forward the ordinance amendments and accompanying resolution to the City Council for introduction and adoption.

DISCUSSION:

Section 14.23 and Chapter 22.80 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code specify Water Conservation Standards applicable within the City. Sections 14.23.009 and 22.80.020 require projects that are subject to design review to comply with Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation, adopted by Council resolution.

The Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation were originally adopted by resolution of the City Council on June 27, 1989 (see Attachment 1). There has been much progress in irrigation technology and sustainable landscaping practices in the last 19 years; therefore, it is time to bring the standards up to date.

In conjunction with the update of the standards, staff recommends amending Sections 14.23.009 and 22.80.020 to add the recently created Single Family Design Board to the list of design review bodies that trigger compliance with the Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation.

A technical advisory group of local landscape architects and horticulturalists was formed to work with City staff. The group met twice and developed the proposed revisions to the Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation.

The major changes in the proposed revisions include:

- A more up-to-date definition of Water Wise plants and an increased variety of plants approved under the Water Wise Plant category.
- No turf is permitted in areas with any dimension less than eight feet, including medians and parkways.
- Weather based irrigation controller and rain sensor is required if an irrigation controller is included in the plans.
- Updated requirements should reflect current efficient irrigation technology.

Development and review of proposed revisions:

- Initial draft was developed by the technical advisory group.
- The proposed revisions were distributed to local landscape architects, landscape contractors, and neighborhood associations.
- Comments received were incorporated into the final draft.
- Meetings were held with ABR, HLC, SFDB and Water Commission for review and comment on final draft.

The next step will be to refer the Ordinance (see Attachment 2) and Resolution (see Attachment 3) to the City Council for introduction and subsequent adoption.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Water conservation is an important part of the City's water supply strategy and sustainability goals. With these revised requirements, we can increase the water efficiency of new landscapes in the City of Santa Barbara.

ATTACHMENT(S): 1. Current Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation
2. Draft Ordinance
3. Draft Resolution

PREPARED BY: Alison Jordan, Water Conservation Coordinator/spm

SUBMITTED BY: Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office

City of Santa Barbara

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS
FOR WATER CONSERVATION

Adopted June 27, 1989

Note: These are the existing standards, with highlights that show where substantive changes have been made in the new standards (see Exhibit A).

I. Introduction

It is the policy of the City of Santa Barbara to promote the efficient use of water. These standards are intended to promote such efficiency while allowing the maximum possible flexibility in designing attractive and cost effective landscapes. The standards were adopted by the Council of the City of Santa Barbara on June 27, 1989 as Resolution No. 89-077. The effective date of the standards is July 27, 1989.

II. Definitions

- A. Landscaped Area: All areas that are proposed to be planted or to be covered with permeable material as a part of a development proposal.
- B. Drought Tolerant Plants: Those plants that are likely, after becoming established, to remain healthy in the proposed location on irrigation limited to twelve inches of water per square foot per year.
- C. Design Review Board: The Architectural Board of Review or Landmarks Committee or any joint meeting of these two boards.

III. Applicability

Compliance with these standards is mandatory for all landscaping proposed as a part of projects that are subject to review by the Architectural Board of Review or Landmarks Committee. (SBMC Section 22.80.020)

IV. Exceptions

Exceptions to these standards may be granted only by the design review board having jurisdiction and only after making a finding that the exception will promote equivalent or greater water conservation. Requests for exceptions shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the City at the time of making application for review by the design review board.

V. Compliance Requirements

- A. All lawns shall utilize turf species listed as low water use varieties on the most recent list of low water use species published by the University of California Cooperative Extension.
- B. Turf shall not be used on slopes of 20% or greater.
- C. Except where additional lawn area is specifically determined by the design review board to be intended for passive or active recreational use, the following restrictions shall apply:
 - 1. Commercial projects shall be designed without the use of turf.
 - 2. In projects other than commercial projects, including residential and institutional type projects, no more than 20% of the landscaped area shall be planted in lawn and/or non-drought tolerant plants.
- D. All planted areas, except those with lawns, groundcover, or other low lying shrubs, shall include mulch material to an average thickness of at least two inches throughout, except in the immediate vicinity of plant stems.
- E. Irrigation systems shall be designed such that there are separate valves serving each of the following areas:
 - 1. Lawn areas;
 - 2. Areas planted with non-drought tolerant plants; and
 - 3. Areas planted with drought tolerant plants.
- F. Irrigation systems shall be designed to prevent overspray and run-off. Areas of sprinkler coverage shall be shown on the irrigation plan.
- G. A written list of irrigation stations, and the precipitation rates of those stations in inches per hour, shall be included on the irrigation plan.
- H. Drip, trickle, or other low volume irrigation shall be provided on at least 25% of the landscaped area.

VI. Recommended Additional Measures

The following components are recommended for inclusion at the option of the designer, except when in conflict with other code requirements:

- A. Provide tensiometers in conjunction with automatic irrigation controllers, where appropriate, installed in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.
- B. Where appropriate as an alternative to automatic irrigation control, use metering valves designed to apply a specified amount of water.
- C. Where feasible, provide permeable paving instead of asphalt or concrete on patios, walkways, and parking areas.
- D. Avoid use of turf and spray-type irrigation systems in areas that have a relatively high perimeter-to-area ratio, such as parkways, medians, and narrow beds.
- E. In cases where structural or horticultural requirements do not conflict, provide infiltration trench, drywell, cistern, or other means to prevent raingutter and pavement run-off from leaving the site.
- F. Provide soils amendments as appropriate to improve moisture holding properties of the soil.
- G. Provide check valves at the low end of irrigation lines to prevent unwanted draining of irrigation lines.

VII. Submittals

- A. Applicants subject to mandatory compliance shall provide all relevant information on the landscape plans, including common and botanical names for plant and turf species, calculations of allowable areas of lawn area and non-drought tolerant plants, required areas of drip/trickle irrigation, and specific requests for any exception to the requirements of these standards. Requests for exception must be accompanied by documentation demonstrating that the finding of equivalent or greater water conservation can be made.
- B. A landscape architect, licensed under the laws of the State of California, shall state on the plans that the landscape design complies with the mandatory elements of these standards.
EXCEPTION: On projects that are limited to one single family residence and on projects consisting solely of landscaping and not more than 5,000 square feet thereof, the owner of the property and a landscape contractor licensed under the laws of the State of California shall also be authorized to state that the plans are in compliance with these standards.

A City-approved format shall be used for all statements of compliance.

VIII. Determination of Conforming Installation

A landscape architect, licensed under the laws of the State of California and listed with the

Building Official as an eligible special inspector, shall inspect the completed installation prior to final building permit approval and shall determine in writing that the installation substantially conforms to the approved plans.

EXCEPTION: On projects that are limited to one single family residence and on projects consisting solely of landscaping and not more than 5,000 square feet thereof, the owner of the property and a landscape contractor licensed under the laws of the State of California shall also be authorized to perform such inspection and conformance determination.

A City-approved format shall be used for all conformance determinations.

IX. Compliance Verification

Verification of compliance with these standards, as applicable, shall be by the Community Development Department and the design review board in accordance with the following requirements:

- A. No development application shall be scheduled for final review by the design review board unless the plans contain all required information and a statement of compliance in accordance with Section VII above.
- B. The design review board shall be authorized to interpret, but not to waive, the requirements of these standards. Any appeal of a decision of the design review board regarding these standards shall be by the process established for appeal of other decisions of the board.
- C. No building permit shall be issued unless the statement of compliance required by Section VII above has been included on the final landscape plans submitted for plan check.
- D. No building permit shall be given final approval prior to receipt by the Building Official of a written determination of conformance as required by Section VIII above.

ATTACHMENT 2

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
DISCUSSION DRAFT 8/5/08
SHOWING CHANGES FROM
CURRENT CODE

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA AMENDING
SECTION 14.23.009 AND CHAPTER 22.80
OF THE SANTA BARBARA MUNICIPAL
CODE REGARDING LANDSCAPE DESIGN
STANDARDS FOR WATER CONSERVATION

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA DOES ORDAIN AS
FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 14.23.009 of Chapter 14.23 of Title 14 of the Santa
Barbara Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

14.23.009 Regulation of New or ~~Rehabilitated~~ ~~Altered~~ Landscapes.

~~All new and rehabilitated landscaping for public and private development project~~
~~that are~~ Each development proposal that proposes new landscaping or
alterations to existing landscaping and that is subject to review of the
Architectural Board of Review, or ~~the Landmarks Committee~~ the Historic
Landmarks Commission, or the Single Family Design Board shall be required to
comply with the City's ~~Water Conservation~~ Landscape Design Standards for
Water Conservation as adopted by resolution of the City Council.

SECTION 2. Chapter 22.80 of Title 22 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

22.80.010 Plumbing Standards for Water Conservation.

Plumbing standards for water conservation shall be as contained in the ~~Uniform~~ [California](#) Plumbing Code as adopted and amended by the City of Santa Barbara in Chapter 22.04 of this Code.

22.80.020 ~~Water Conservation~~ Landscape Design Standards [for Water Conservation](#).

Each development proposal [that proposes new landscaping or alterations to existing landscaping and](#) that is subject to the review of the Architectural Board of Review, ~~or~~ the Historic Landmarks Commission, [or the Single Family Design Board](#) shall be required to comply with the City's ~~Water Conservation~~ Landscape Design Standards [for Water Conservation](#) as adopted by resolution of the City Council. ~~Each development proposal not subject to such review shall comply with such other water conservation landscape requirements as may be adopted by the City Council.~~

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
SANTA BARBARA ADOPTING THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN
STANDARDS FOR WATER CONSERVATION**

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the City of Santa Barbara to promote water conservation;

WHEREAS, landscape irrigation represents a significant portion of the water use within the City;

WHEREAS, Sections 14.23.009 and 22.80.020 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code requires projects subject to design review to comply with adopted Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation;

WHEREAS, on June 27, 1989, the City of Santa Barbara adopted the Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation; and

WHEREAS, there has been much advancement achieved through irrigation technology and sustainable landscaping practices in the last 19 years; therefore it is time to bring the standards up-to-date.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation attached hereto as Exhibit A are hereby adopted as referenced in Santa Barbara Municipal Code Sections 14.23.009 and 22.080.020.
2. Resolution Number 89-077, dated June 27, 1989, is hereby repealed.

Exhibit A

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION DRAFT 8/5/08 SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES FROM CURRENT STANDARDS HIGHLIGHTED

City of Santa Barbara

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR WATER CONSERVATION

Adopted _____, 2008

I. Introduction

It is the policy of the City of Santa Barbara to promote water conservation. Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 22.80 requires the adoption of the Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation ("Landscape Design Standards.") These Landscape Design Standards are intended to promote water conservation while allowing the maximum possible flexibility in designing attractive and cost effective water-wise landscapes. The Landscape Design Standards were adopted by the Council of the City of Santa Barbara on June 27, 1989 as Resolution No. 89-077, and were updated on _____, 2008 as Resolution No. _____.

II. Definitions

- A. Landscaped Area: All areas where new or altered landscaping is proposed as a part of a development proposal.
- B. Water Wise Plants: Those plants that are evaluated as needing "low" (10-30% ETo) or "very low"(<10% ETo) amounts of irrigation water as defined and listed by Water Use Classifications of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) at <http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/wucols00.pdf> or other sources of water-wise plant water use classifications as verified by a licensed landscape architect.
- C. Turf: A groundcover surface of mowed grass, with an irrigation water need of >30% ETo.
- D. Weather Based Irrigation Controller: An irrigation controller that automatically adjusts the irrigation schedule based on changes in the weather.
- E. Design Review Body: The Architectural Board of Review, Single Family Design Board or the Historic Landmarks Commission.
- F. Public Works Director: The Director of the Public Works Department or his or her designee.

G. Landscape Plan: Design plans with a planting plan, an irrigation plan, or both.

III. Applicability

Compliance with these landscape design standards is mandatory for all new or altered landscaping proposed as a part of projects that are subject to review by any design review body. (SBMC Section 22.80.020)

IV. Compliance Requirements

Applicants proposing new or altered landscaping shall comply with each of the following requirements in the design, installation, and maintenance of the landscaped area, unless an exception is granted pursuant to Section V.

A. Landscape Plan:

Applicants shall submit a landscape plan depicting the landscaped area and all existing landscaping to remain on the lot as determined by the Community Development Department.

B. Turf and Water Wise Plants:

1. The landscaped area of projects proposing exclusively commercial uses shall be designed without the use of turf and with 100% water wise plants.
2. The landscaped area of single family residential, multi-family residential, mixed-use, and institutional type projects shall be designed with no more than 20% of the landscaped area planted in turf or plants that are not water-wise plants.
3. Turf is not permitted in parkways, medians or other areas within the landscaped area with any dimension of less than eight feet. Turf shall not be used on slopes of 20% or greater within the landscaped area.
4. Notwithstanding requirements 1 and 2 above, additional turf areas may be recommended by the design review body to the Public Works Director for approval for areas designed and used for outdoor sporting and recreational activities.

C. Mulch:

The landscaped area, except those portions of the landscaped area planted with turf, groundcover, succulents or other low lying shrubs, shall be covered with mulch material to an average thickness of at least **three inches** throughout, except in the immediate vicinity of woody trunks. Additional mulch material shall be added from time to time as necessary in order to maintain the required depth of mulch.

D. Irrigation: All new or altered irrigation systems proposed as part of a development proposal shall incorporate the following requirements in their design, installation, and

maintenance:

1. Irrigation systems shall be designed and installed to avoid overspray and runoff. Valves shall be separated for individual hydrozones based on plant water needs and sun/shade requirements.
2. In the event that an automatic irrigation system is included in the landscape plan, a weather based irrigation controller with a rain shutoff sensor shall be required for the entire irrigation system.
3. Areas less than eight feet wide shall be irrigated only with bubblers, rotating nozzles on pop-up bodies, sub-surface, or drip irrigation.
4. Drip irrigation shall be provided on at least 25% of the landscaped area.
5. All sprinklers shall have matched precipitation rates within each valve and circuit. All irrigation systems shall be designed to include optimum distribution uniformity, head-to-head spacing and setbacks from walkways and pavement.
6. All irrigation systems shall provide check valves at the low end of irrigation lines to prevent unwanted draining of irrigation lines.
7. Pressure regulators are required on the irrigation system, unless the Public Works Director determines a pressure regulator is not necessary.

E. Grading:

The grading of the landscaped area shall be designed, conducted, and maintained in order to achieve the following goals:

1. The grading shall encourage water retention and infiltration by preserving open space and creating depressed areas/swales.
2. The grading shall mimic natural, pre-development hydrologic flow paths.
3. The grading shall maintain and/or increase the width of flow paths in order to decrease flow rates.

V. Exceptions

Exceptions to these landscape design standards may be granted by the Public Works Director upon a finding that the exception will promote equivalent or greater water conservation than is provided for in the landscape design standards. Requests for exceptions shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the Public Works Director at the time the application is submitted to the design review body. The design review body may make a recommendation to the Public Works Director for consideration of an exception

based on plant selection.

VI. Submittals

- A. Applicants shall provide all relevant information on the landscape plan, including botanical names for plant and turf species, percentage calculations of allowable areas of turf, medium or high water use plants, and water-wise plants, and specific requests for any exception to the requirements of these Landscape Design Standards. Requests for exceptions must be accompanied by documentation demonstrating that the finding of equivalent or greater water conservation can be made. Areas of existing landscaping to remain unaltered shall be indicated on the landscape plan.
- B. The landscape plan shall be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the California Business and Professions Code relating to the practice of landscape architecture (Business and Professions Code § 5641 et seq.).
- C. The landscape plan shall include a "Statement of Compliance" in a form approved by the City certifying that the landscape design complies with the mandatory elements of these Landscape Design Standards. The Statement of Compliance shall be signed by the person who prepared the plans.

VII. Determination of Conforming Installation

The person who prepared the landscape plan shall inspect the installation of the plantings and any irrigation system included in the plan and shall certify in writing that the installation substantially conforms to the approved Landscape Plan.

VIII. Compliance Verification

Verification of compliance with the Landscape Design Standards, as applicable, shall be made by the Community Development Department and the design review body in accordance with the following requirements:

- A. No development application shall be scheduled for final review by the design review body unless the landscape plan contains all required information and a statement of compliance in accordance with Section VI above.
- B. No building permit shall be issued unless the statement of compliance required by Section VI above has been included on the final landscape plan submitted for plan check.
- C. No building permit shall be given a final inspection or issued a certificate of occupancy until the Building Official receives a written determination of conformance as required by Section VII above.